

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A sensing system for measuring a parameter, said system comprising:  
a single sensor element, said single sensor element providing a sensor signal that varies with the measured parameter;  
a first output circuit responsive to the sensor signal and providing a first output signal; and  
a second output circuit responsive to the sensor signal and providing a second output signal, wherein the first and second output signals are two of multiple outputs from the sensor element.
2. The system according to claim 1 further comprising shared circuits coupled to the sensor element and the first and second output circuits, said shared circuits including circuit elements used by both the first and second output circuits.
3. The system according to claim 1 further comprising a supervisor circuit, said supervisor circuit monitoring the sensor element and the output circuits, said supervisor circuit forcing the first or second output signals to change to a diagnostics range in response to a problem with the sensor element or the output circuits.
4. The system according to claim 1 wherein the first output circuit and the second output circuit change the sensor signal in a different manner so that the first

output signal and the second output signal change differently from each other during normal operation of the system.

5. The system according to claim 1 wherein the sensor element is selected from the group consisting of Hall-effect sensors, inductive sensors, magneto-resistive sensors, encoders and potentiometers.

6. The system according to claim 1 wherein the sensing system monitors the condition of a parameter or component in a vehicle.

7. The system according to claim 6 wherein the sensing system monitors a throttle plate position in a throttle body.

8. A sensing system for measuring a parameter, said system comprising:  
a single sensor element, said single sensor element providing a sensor signal that varies with the measured parameter;  
a first output circuit responsive to the sensor signal and providing a first output signal;  
a second output circuit responsive to the sensor signal and providing a second output signal, wherein the first and second output signals are two of multiple outputs from the single sensor element, and wherein the first output circuit and the second output circuit change the sensor signal in a different manner so that the first

output signal and the second output signal change differently from each other during normal operation of the system; and

a supervisor circuit, said supervisor circuit monitoring the sensor element and the output circuits, said supervisor circuit forcing the first or second output signals to change to a diagnostics range in response to a problem with the sensor element or the output circuits.

9. A sensing system for monitoring a parameter of a vehicle, said system comprising:

a single sensor element for sensing the parameter, said single sensor element providing a sensor signal;

shared circuits coupled to the sensor element, said shared circuits providing sensing system operations;

a first output circuit responsive to the sensor signal from the shared circuits, said first output circuit providing a first output signal; and

a second output circuit responsive to the sensor signal from the shared circuits, said second output circuit providing a second output signal, wherein the first and second output signals are multiple outputs from the sensor element.

10. The system according to claim 9 further comprising a supervisor circuit, said supervisor circuit monitoring the sensor element, output circuits and the shared circuits, said supervisor circuit forcing the first or second output signals to change to a

diagnostics range in response to a problem with the sensor element, the output circuits or the shared circuits.

11. The system according to claim 9 wherein the first output circuit and the second output circuit change the sensor signal in a different manner so that the first output signal and the second output signal change differently from each other during normal operation of the system.

12. The system according to claim 9 wherein the sensor element is selected from the group consisting of Hall-effect sensors, inductive sensors, magneto-resistive sensors, encoders and potentiometers.

13. The system according to claim 9 wherein the sensing system monitors a throttle plate position in a throttle body.

14. A method of sensing a parameter, said method comprising:  
sensing the parameter with a single sensor element and providing a sensor signal indicative of the parameter;  
applying the sensor signal to a first output circuit, said first output circuit providing a first output signal indicative of the sensed condition; and  
applying the sensor signal to a second output circuit, said second output circuit providing a second output signal indicative of the sensed condition, wherein the first and second output signals are two of multiple outputs from the sensor element.

15. The method according to claim 14 further comprising applying the sensor signal to shared circuits before applying the sensor signal to the first and second output circuits.

16. The method according to claim 14 further comprising monitoring the operation of the output circuits and the single sensor element by a supervisor circuit, said supervisor circuit forcing the first output signal or the second output signal into a diagnostic range in response to a problem with the sensor element or the output circuits.

17. The method according to claim 14 wherein the first output circuit and the second output circuit change the sensor signal in a different manner so that the first output signal and the second output signal change differently from each other during normal operation of the system.

18. The method according to claim 14 wherein the parameter is the position of a throttle plate.